

## REMARKS

In the July 6, 2005 Office Action, the Examiner noted that claims 1-3, 9-11 and 17 were pending in the application; rejected claims 2 and 10 under the second paragraph of 35 USC § 112; rejected claims 1, 2, 9, 10 and 17 under 35 USC § 102(a); and rejected claims 3 and 11 under 35 USC § 103(a). In rejecting the claims, U.S. Patent 6,591,291 to Gabber et al. (Reference A in the August 27, 2004 Office Action) was cited. Claims 1-3, 9-11 and 17 remain in the case. The Examiner's rejections are traversed below.

### Rejections under 35 USC § 112, Second Paragraph

In the second and third paragraphs on page 2 of the Office Action, claims 2 and 10 were rejected under the second paragraph of 35 USC § 112 because they recite "select[ing a] processing method different from the one selected in their parent claim 1 and 9" and as a result it "is not clear which processing method is used for processing the received e-mail."

It is submitted that this rejection should be withdrawn because claims 2 and 10 do not recite "the received e-mail" referring to the e-mail processed in the parent claims. Rather, they recite "e-mail having a particular property" (e.g., claim 2, lines 2-3). As a result, there is no indefiniteness regarding how "the received e-mail" recited in claim 1 is processed. Rather, claims 2 and 10 recite that other e-mail may be processed in different ways. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

### Prior Art Rejections

The July 6, 2005 Office Action states that the rejections under 35 USC §§ 102(a) and 103(a) are set forth in "a prior Office action" and asserts that item 440 in Fig. 4 of Gabber et al. discloses indicates that the system disclosed by Gabber et al. "has more than one process method to select ..." However, the only operation disclosed in Gabber et al. is substituting a "real source address" in block 450 of Fig. 4 and block 440 only indicates that block 450 may or may not be performed.

The independent claims have been amended to recite that the methods of processing email include "sending a delivery-error email message back to a sender of the received email stating that no receiver has been found at the destination of the received email when a character string in the mail address matches a predetermined character string designated for the destination" (e.g., claim 1, last four lines). This particular method of processing email is described on page 16 with reference to Fig. 3A; on page 29, lines 21-24 with reference to Fig. 12; and in the

detailed example at page 36, lines 15-21 where "error" processing is defined on page 33, lines 5-9. There is no suggestion in Gabber et al. of processing received email by sending what appears to be an error message. Furthermore, what is recited in independent claims is not a conventional error message, because it is sent "when a character string in the mail address **matches** a predetermined character string designated for the destination" (e.g., claim 1, last two lines, emphasis added), rather than when the entire address does not match an address at the domain.

As disclosed in the specification, the present invention can be used to implement a routing function which re-directs received email messages to one specified mail-box if the received email messages bear destination email addresses that are the same except for character strings located at pre-specified positions within the email addresses. As a result, it becomes possible to use many email addresses all to be re-directed to one specified mail-box without paying attention to the email addresses of the other email boxes by assigning to each email address the "same character string" part that is to be filled with mail-box specific set of character strings.

As discussed above, the independent claims recite "sending a delivery-error email message back to a sender of the received email stating that no receiver has been found at the destination of the received email when a character string in the mail address matches a predetermined character string designated for the destination." As disclosed in the specification, a phrase option setting unit may be provided for specifying an option phrase to be included in the delivery-error email message. The mail processing unit sends the delivery-error email message containing the specified phrase back to the sender of the received email message when the character string located at the pre-specified position within the destination email address the mail-address-extracting unit has extracted from the received email message equals one of predetermined character strings.

As explained above, email messages of which the destination email addresses are the same with respect to their character strings located at positions other than the pre-specified positions are re-directed, in principle, to the same mail-box. This configuration enables a user of this mail-box specify whether or not to send back delivery-error email messages stating that no relevant receiver has been found for each group of emails messages that hold the same character string at the pre-specified positions within the destination email addresses.

A user assigned with one of these mail boxes constituting this system becomes able to send delivery-error email messages back to senders of junk email messages such as those

called "spam" messages stating that no relevant receiver is found. In particular, the user can select email addresses to which junk email messages arrive frequently, set the device so as to send delivery-error email messages stating that no relevant receiver is found back only to senders of frequent spam messages in a repeated manner as long as they continue to arrive.

As an effect of this manner of response, the senders of these spam messages comes to receive transmission error messages every time they send spam messages to this particular email address. These transmission error messages are considered effective in leading the senders to understand that there is no receiver at this particular email address and hence able to stop these senders sending spam messages to this particular email address.

Additionally to the above-stated feature, the phrase option setting unit for specifying an option phrase to be included in a delivery error message provides a user a way of assigning different phrases respectively for send groups, which are to group senders depending on the email addresses they direct their junk messages to. The user, consequently, become able to send a notice of having closed an email address because, for instance, too many spam messages having received, return a delivery-error message additionally containing a warning that states an anti-spam measure is underway or return a deliver-error message constituting a warning to spam message senders.

For the above reasons, it is submitted that claims 1, 9 and 17 patentably distinguish over Gabber et al.

Claims 2, 3, 10 and 11 depend from claims 1 and 9 and therefore, claims 2, 3, 10 and 11 patentably distinguish over Gabber et al. for the reasons discussed above. It is submitted that Gabber et al. does not disclose this operation, because there is only one way that email is changed, i.e., substituting the real source address in block 450 of Fig. 4. Since the other alternative is **not processing** there is no need to specify a processing method, but merely to indicate whether the **only** processing method is to be performed. There is a distinction between these two things. The lack of processing methods in the disclosure taught by Gabber et al. means that there is no suggestion of specifying a processing method. Therefore, it is submitted that claims 2 and 10 further patentably distinguish over the prior art due to the additional limitations recited therein.

## Summary

It is submitted that the references cited by the Examiner, taken individually or in combination, do not teach or suggest the features of the present claimed invention. Thus, it is submitted that claims 1-3, 9-11 and 17 are in a condition suitable for allowance. Entry of the Amendment, reconsideration of the claims and an early Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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